




FACULTY OF  
ARTS AND SCIENCE

Department  
of Religion

# BOOK LAUNCH

Wednesday, November 12, 2014



The Department of Religion is delighted to welcome you to this book launch. We are extremely excited to have so many of our faculty members, both full-time and part-time, participate in this event, to read and discuss elements from their books. Thank you for joining us. We hope you enjoy the book launch.

**Jose Abraham:** *Islamic Reform and Colonial Discourse on Modernity in India: Socio-Political and Religious Thought of Vakkom Moulavi.*

Colonialism was much more than another account of imperialism in human history. It introduced European categories and concepts into everyday habits of thought of the colonized. Focusing on writings of Vakkom Moulavi, who is known as the father of 'Islamic reform' in Kerala, South India, Abraham argues that the socio-religious reform movements of the colonial period were largely shaped by the discourse on modernity.

**Donald Boisvert:** *Queer Religion (2 volumes).*

*Queer Religion* is a two-volume collection that explores the myriad intersections of religion and same-sex desire in a wide variety of religious traditions and practices. Designed primarily as a reference source for libraries, it aims to reframe religion as a dynamically queer-positive cultural space.

**Naftali Cohn:** *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis.*

In *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis*, Naftali S. Cohn argues that the memory of the Temple served a political function for the rabbis in their own time. The rabbis described the Temple and its ritual in a unique way that helped establish their authority within the context of Roman Palestine in the early third century. In a detailed, nuanced, way, rabbinic Temple discourse was bound up with the rabbis' own realities and with the manner in which they positioned themselves within society.

**Carly Daniel-Hughes:** *The Salvation of the Flesh in Tertullian of Carthage: Dressing for the Resurrection.*

How could serious theologians, like Tertullian of Carthage (160-220 C.E.), debating such weighty issues as the salvation of humankind, feel it necessary to argue with such vehemence about what Christians wore? *The Salvation of the Flesh* argues that dress was a fundamental question for Christian theology and identity in antiquity. Situating Tertullian's writings in the culture of the Roman world, Daniel-Hughes demonstrates how he uses dress to articulate Christian masculinity in ethnic non-Roman (anti-imperial) terms. Women's dress, alternatively, was caught up with intra-communal debates about the flesh and its transformation into glorious, eternal bodies.

**Carly Daniel-Hughes: *Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity.***

The past two decades have witnessed a proliferation of scholarship on dress in the ancient world. These recent studies have established the extent to which Greece and Rome were vestimentary cultures, and they have demonstrated the critical role dress played in communicating individuals' identities, status, and authority. This volume fills an important gap in these studies, examining dress in a variety of ancient religious sources (including literature, art, performance, coinage, economic markets, and memories) from the first century BCE to the fifth century CE. Essays demonstrate how religious meanings were entangled with other social logics, revealing the many layers of meaning attached to ancient dress, as well as the extent to which dress was implicated in numerous domains of ancient religious life.

**Marc des Jardins: *Le sutra de la Mahamayuri : rituel et politique dans la Chine des Tang (618-907)***

Mahamayuri was an important Buddhist deity whose powers evolved from the protection of snakebites to the control of epidemics, to the subjugation of demons and to the overall control of the gods and demons. She was originally an anthropomorphized spell (dharani) which slowly grew to become a full fledged Buddhist deity with her own retinue and her own mandala universe. Her scripture, which the final version dates to the Tang dynasty (8th c.), initiated an important genre in Esoteric Buddhism as well as in Daoism. Despite the foreign nature of its pantheon, Mahamayuri's rites were celebrated on the Imperial Palace's grounds in the presence of several Chinese emperors. This essay, concluded with a full translation of its last Chinese version, not only researches the growth of this deity but also studies the evolution of Esoteric Buddhism and its function in high Tang society.

**Richard Foltz: *Religions of Iran: From Prehistory to the Present.***

Religions of Iran brings to light the often neglected influence of Iranian ideas throughout the history of the world's religions -- including Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaeism, Islam and others -- from prehistory up to the present day. The book also provides a new analytical framework, according to which Zoroastrianism is seen not as the "essential" form of Iranian religion, but simply as the most successful among numerous competing versions of it.

**Hillary Kaell: *Walking Where Jesus Walked: American Christians and Holy Land Pilgrimage.***

*Walking Where Jesus Walked* is the first in-depth study of the cultural and religious significance of US Holy Land travel after 1948. It places evangelical and Catholic pilgrimage into the context of broad historical trends, analyzing how its growth relates to changes in American Christian theology and culture over the last sixty years, including shifts in Jewish-Christian relations, the growth of small group spirituality, and the development of a Christian leisure industry.



**Susan Palmer:** *The New Heretics of France: Minority Religions, la Republique, and the Government-sponsored "War on Sects".*

*The New Heretics of France* examines the recent militant secularism that emerged out of historic church-state tensions in France. Based on fieldwork among France's most controversial "sectes", this study documents many cases of religious discrimination, tracks the trajectory of France's government-sponsored "anticult" movement, and offers a sociological analysis of France's treatment of its religious minorities since 1994.

**Norman Ravvin:** *Failure's Opposite: Listening to A.M. Klein.*

*Failure's Opposite: Listening to A.M. Klein* (co-edited with Sherry Simon) is the most up-to-date consideration of Montreal writer A.M. Klein. It was inspired by a conference hosted by the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.

**Norman Ravvin:** *The Wordless Leonard Cohen Songbook.*

*The Wordless Leonard Cohen Songbook* is made up of 80 woodcut prints by Toronto based artist and book maker George A. Walker. Norman Ravvin contributes the wordless biography's introduction, and collaborated with Walker in the consideration of Cohen's life in images.

**Ira Robinson, editor:** *Canada's Jews in Time, Space, and Spirit.*

Canada is home to one of the world's largest and most culturally creative Jewish communities, one of the few in the Diaspora that continues to grow demographically. With its ability to mirror trends found in Jewish communities elsewhere (particularly in the United States) while simultaneously functioning as a distinct society, Canada's Jewish community holds great interest for scholars, exercising a measurable influence on the culture and politics of world Jewry. Consisting of a series of essays written by experts in their respective fields, *Canada's Jews* is a topical encyclopedia covering a wide variety of topics from history and religion to the intellectual and cultural contributions of Canada's Jews.



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